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SUBJECT: FINLAND: COMMENTS ON GYMNICHE SEPTEMBER 5-6

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¶11. (SBU) Summary: PolOff delivered points from reftels to Markku Lampinen, Deputy Director European Correspondent, Unit for European Common Foreign and Security Policy on September 3. Lampinen stated that the extraordinary European Council (EC) meeting on Monday (September 1) left less for the Foreign Ministers to discuss. He stated that the Government of Finland (GOF) is pleased with the EC meeting's outcome, where a consensus message to Russia was crafted without resorting to sanctions. He expects Georgia/Russia to dominate the discussion on September 5-6. Regarding the Middle East Peace Process, he expects discussion on how the process should proceed despite internal Israeli political changes. On Transatlantic relations, Lampinen discussed possible opportunities to enhance EU-US cooperation and commented on the need to consider new and traditional threats within EU Security strategy. He suggested Afghanistan/Pakistan would have a place on the agenda due partly to the recent French military casualties there. Lampinen did not comment on the Balkans. End Summary.

Russia/Georgia

¶12. (SBU) According to Lampinen, the ministers could reach some decisions in their Friday and Saturday meetings on the concept for the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) mission. He stated that two things were required before the ESDP mission could move forward. First, the mission needs a UN Security Council green light for peacekeeping operations to go forward. Second, Lampinen stated that a paper on the proposed EU-OSCE platform and how to bring the different actors together (EU, UN, OSCE, US, Russia, World Bank) will be presented in Vienna by early next week. He said that the target number for the proposed ESDP civilian mission is 200, with ten from Finland, and noted that the ESDP presence would facilitate Russian withdrawal from safety zones as part of the "Six Point Plan" by putting international observers in place. He stated that there would be one chairman or high level representative for the program. Lampinen also noted that Sarkozy is to visit Moscow soon and reconvey the OSCE Chairman's message to move forward with concrete deployment of the remaining agreed-upon OSCE observers. Based on the Partnership Agreement (EU-Russia) negotiations postponement, ideas for constructive cooperation with Russia in one of the "four common spaces" (economic; freedom, security and justice; external security; research and education) could come up.

Middle East & Peace Process

¶13. (SBU) Lampinen believes EU positions will remain the same in spite of the upcoming Israeli Prime Minister change and that the peace process should continue despite Israel's internal politics. The EU would convey the message to the Israelis that they need to see real improvements on the ground for Palestinians, especially relative to settlements,

road blocks and check points. Lampinen noted that while they welcomed the removal of some check points, they weren't the most relevant check points to Palestinian everyday life, and while they welcomed the freed prisoners, the Israelis still hold around 10,000 in prison. (Note: When asked about FM Stubb's current visit (September 2) to the Middle East, Lampinen related that Stubb wanted to go for some time, and so far, the trip is going well. End Note)

¶ 14. (SBU) On Lebanon and Syria, Lampinen felt there would be a positive outcome with the unity government in Lebanon, that Lebanon could elect a president and finally establish diplomatic relations with Syria and mark the border, though nothing has occurred yet. He believes that even with Hezbollah in government, extremist disarmament and the Harare murder investigation should continue and that the EU should support unity and the integrity of the Lebanese army. GoF is in favor of improvement in EU-Syrian relations on the condition that Syria shows a "constructive attitude" and supports democratic development in Lebanon and enhances its own social reforms. France has proposed the signing of the long-tabled EU-Syria Association Agreement.

EU Security Strategy & Transatlantic Relations

¶ 15. (SBU) Lampinen remarked that Sarkozy has consistently favored improved Transatlantic relations. The ministers expect an interim report from High Representative Solana as to the current state of work on revisions to the 2003 security strategy. The work proceeds through the European Institute for Security Studies (ISS) seminars with the next scheduled for Helsinki September 18 and 19 and the revised document expected in December. Lampinen stated that the

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EU-US strategic dialogue should reflect current international challenges and international agendas, including enhanced EU-NATO cooperation. He reiterated Foreign Minister Stubb's wish to invite the NATO Secretary General to address the Foreign Ministers and come to other EU fora. Lampinen also remarked that while the security strategy would look at new threats and global challenges, it also had to look at traditional security threats starting with European stability. He mentioned the need to identify fields where Transatlantic relations could be enhanced. For example, the GoF would like EU-US cooperation to extend beyond political and security subjects and include science and technology, and expand on development policy.

Afghanistan/Pakistan

¶ 16. (SBU) Lampinen said that Afghanistan and Pakistan did not originally appear on the agenda, but with the recent loss of French troops, they are a source of great concern. Ultimately, Afghanistan must find a political solution and the EU should try to guarantee security for the August 2009 Afghan elections. Lampinen hoped that a high level EU delegation will visit Pakistan soon to establish a dialogue even though the current Pakistani domestic political situation is unclear. GoF thinks the EU should react to the refugee problem and the humanitarian situation caused by the Taliban fighting. Lampinen mentioned that GoF favors doubling the size of EUPOL operations and is looking for more people to send.

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